

Numbers 16:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?

Analysis

Moses' rhetorical question highlighted the privilege already granted: separated from the congregation to draw near to God, serve in the tabernacle, minister to the people. This inventory of blessings exposed the ingratitude underlying their complaint. Rebellion often begins not with lack of blessing but with unthankfulness for blessings received.

Historical Context

Being 'brought near' expressed special favor—the Levites had access and service other Israelites lacked. Their duties included caring for the tabernacle, assisting priests, and teaching the people (Deuteronomy 33:10). They enjoyed both spiritual privilege and material provision (Numbers 18), yet they craved more.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does focusing on what you lack rather than what God has given breed discontent?
2. What spiritual privileges do you take for granted that others would treasure?

Interlinear Text

ס	מְעֵד	מִקְדָּשׁ	בְּ	בְּדִיל	אֱלֹהִים
Seemeth it but a small thing			H4480	H3588	hath separated unto you that the God
	H4592			H914	H430
ל	אֶתְכֶם	וְשָׁרָא	ה	קָדוֹשׁ	אֶתְכֶם
of Israel	H853		the congregation	of Israel	to bring you near
H3478		H5712		H3478	H7126
אֵל	עֲבֹדָה	עֲבֹדָה	מִשְׁבֵּט	יְהָוָה	אֵל יְהָוָה
H413	to himself to do	H853	the service	of the tabernacle	of the LORD
	H5647		H5656	H4908	H3068
לְעַמְּךָ	לְפָנֶיךָ	קָדוֹשׁ	לְשִׁרְתְּךָ		
and to stand	before	the congregation	to minister		
H5975	H6440	H5712	H8334		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 7:13 (References God): And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

Deuteronomy 10:8 (References Lord): At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day.

Nehemiah 12:44 (Parallel theme): And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes,

to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited.

Numbers 1:53 (Temple): But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.

Numbers 16:13 (Parallel theme): Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?

Numbers 3:6 (Parallel theme): Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

1 Samuel 18:23 (Parallel theme): And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?